



## DOUBLE ENTRY

By Roby Wentz

ON AN APRIL morning when all the little stenographers had wriggled into their cutest Spring blouses, when cops on the downtown corners couldn't find it in their hearts to bawl out careless drivers and when even bus exhaust fumes smelled invigorating, Eddy Cleary

was worried by the silence of Sam Arkus, his boss.

He eyed Sam covertly, his gaze flicking back and forth between his ledger and his adding machine, keeping up a running fire of patter to fill in around Sam's discomfiting quietude, above the peck and clatter

Based on a radio script originally written for the CBS radio program *Suspense*

By

ROBERT W. MINTON



of the Sunstrand machine:

"... four seventy-five . . . two thirty-two . . . nine twenty-nine . . . point seven-three—and she balances!"

Sam's pen ceased to scratch across the ledger. He raised his head and appeared to puzzle over the Old Forester sign atop the cafeteria building across Pershing Square.

"It always balances in the double entry system," Eddy prattled on, tearing the tape out of the machine with a sharp, satisfied sound. "So I don't spend the rest of the day lookin' for two cents, like last month."

Sam transferred his attention to the Union Pacific sign with its red-white-and-blue shield.

"Don't talk so much, Sam," Eddy said, very flippant. "I can't hardly hear myself add."

Sam opened a V-shaped mouth.

"Eddy, hand me that Dixie cup, will ya?"

Eddy handed him the cup. "Your ulcers botherin' you again, Sam?"

Sam hitched his suspenders higher, got up, ran water into the cup and sipped it, standing beside the water cooler. He passed stubby fingers through thin sandy hair. He was a short stocky guy with a broad deadpan face and he still talked New Yorkese after fifteen years in the West. Eddy liked Sam.

Sam crumpled the cup and threw it into the waste basket like he was pitching a fast ball for a strike.

"Yeah, bad. These ledgers are drivin' me nuts."

Eddy laid the tape carefully in his ledger and closed it.

"You got the wrong temperament for an accountant, Sam."

"A swell time to tell me after twenty years at the job," Sam said.

"You shouldn't let it getcha down, Sam."

Sam moved over and looked at the people walking through the Square among the green trees and flower beds, eight floors down.

"Things can't go on like this, Eddy," he said, like he was holding himself in.

"Cheer up," Eddy said. "Maybe the Angels will cop the pennant after all, this year. They got two new pitchers, remember—"

"That ain't what I mean, Eddy."

Eddy came over beside Sam at the window. He was a rail-thin blond with light eyebrows and a way of talking he had maybe picked up from Sam—sort of half rapid-fire, half drawl. He saw this was serious, so he snapped one of Sam's suspenders and said, very friendly:

"What do you mean, Sam?"

Sam didn't look at him. "You wouldn't understand, Eddy."

Eddy's wide, homely mouth drooped. "Aw, you always say that, Sam. I'm an understandin' guy, Sam. Mabel says I am."

"Mabel says!" Sam parroted scornfully. "You understand Mabel. Does she understand you?"

"Certainly," Eddy said. "Perfectly. A man's wife's gotta understand him. If she don't, what good is she?"

"A nice way to look at it," Sam said cynically. "Very nice—if your wife understands you."

"All right," Eddy said. "Let's have it. I suppose Alice don't understand you?"

"No, Alice don't understand me," Sam said, his voice high and mimicking, but still with that tight, held-in effect.

"That," Eddy said triumphantly, "is 'cause you don't try to understand Alice."

Sam whirled on him. "Will you shut up! Sometimes you're so damn smug . . .!"

Eddy lifted placatory hands. "Aw, Sam. Lay off. You know you can't go on like this."

Sam strolled aimlessly around the office. "Like what?"

"You know like what. Grouch all the time. I can see there's somethin' on your mind, Sam. You think I'm workin' under you for six years and can't tell? All right. So Alice don't understand. Try *me* out, Sam. I won't throw no dishes at you."

Suddenly Sam fell into his swivel chair and pressed his forehead against his two fists.

"Eddy," he said, "I can't stand it much longer!"

Eddy stared, trouble in his eyes. "Stand *what*, Sammy?"

"I can't tell you," Sam said softly. "It wouldn't help if I did. You can't do anything."

"Just telling your troubles helps sometimes," Eddy said, wisely, not going near Sam, keeping his distance. "Talk, Sam."

"Uh, uh."

"Talk, Sam," Eddy repeated.

"Okay, okay!" Sam shouted. Eddy

jumped and Sam lowered his voice some and said "It's the auditors."

Eddy recovered fast and laughed. He came over and sat on the edge of Sam's desk.

"Them guys?" he said, scornfully. "Don't let *them* worry ya. You're runnin' this office, ain't you? You tell *them*, don't let them tell *you*."

Sam was shaking his head and kind of moaning low, like a dog that's sick. "I'm telling you Eddy," he groaned. "They're gettin' awful close."

"*What are you talkin' about!*" yelled Eddy. "What is it, Sam? Spit it out, willya?"

"I'm light," Sam said.

For a moment after he said it, you could hear the rumble-roar of the Fifth Street cars and the toneless growling of the Wilshire buses, because there was no sound in the office. You could even hear some crackpot orator giving a speech from the rim of the fountain clear out in the middle of the Square.

After awhile Eddy said "Did you say 'light' . . . Sam . . .?"

"The books," Sam said angrily, like he was sore at Eddy for being so dumb. "They're light. They're short. Get it?"

"Yeah . . . yeah . . ." Eddy said softly, watching Sam like he was an animal in a zoo.

"I'm a crook, Eddy," Sam said viciously. "An embezzler. They're gonna get me. Those auditors. They're on to me. I can feel 'em gettin' closer. After nine years, they're on the trial."

"I don't believe it," Eddy said violently. "You a crook, Sam? Horse feathers!"

"I wish I was dreaming," Sam said in a dead voice, his hands gripped in tight fists.

"Sam," Eddy said, "you're the fair-haired boy around here. Hell, Sammy, all you gotta do, if you need dough, is ask . . ."

"Ask who?" Sam said bitterly. "Ask Bartholomew, you mean? That tight-fisted old—"

"Alice!" Eddy exclaimed suddenly.

"What?" Sam queried, startled.

"Alice!" repeated Eddy firmly. "I know: It's her. She couldn't live on your dough. Oh, no. Mink wraps, diamonds, a Cadillac, champagne in water-glasses. That's for Alice!" He crimped his lips together. "I get it!"

There were tears in Sam's voice. "Don't blame her, Eddy."

"Don't *blame* her!" Eddy echoed, astonished. "Don't—"

"Blame me for listening to her." Eddy wagged his head. "Sam Arkus an embezzler! And for nine years!"

"Don't say it, Eddy," Sam moaned softly. His head fell forward against his fists again, and he rocked gently in his chair.

"How much?" breathed Eddy.

"One hundred thousand dollars and eleven cents," Sam groaned. "Where am I gonna get that kinda money, Eddy? And the auditors closin' in . . ."

"One hundred grand . . .!" Eddy

whistled. "I could add up the eleven cents, but—"

"Wisecracks!" Sam said bitterly. "With jail staring me in the puss, he wisecracks . . .!"

"Whatta ya want me to say," Eddy asked indignantly. "What's *your* answer when your boss calls himself a crook?"

"I had to get it offa my chest. I feel better already. Nine years of hell, Eddy . . ."

"You kept from showin' it pretty well for eight years and six months," Eddy said dryly. "That's why you're so nervous lately, eh?"

"That's where my ulcers came from."

"How did it start, Sam?"

"I was playin' the market, I told her. And I was. And then the stocks dropped outa sight, an' it was margin they wanted, margin, margin, margin . . .!"

"And you doctored the books."

"*Did* I doctor the books!" Sam whistled. "Eddy, it was plastic surgery!" The buzzer on his desk whirled like a nervous rattlesnake, and Sam jumped as if it were.

"Take the phone, Eddy, will-ya . . . ?"

Eddy picked up the phone. "Hello, yes, Mr. Bartholomew. You want to see him, Mr. Bartholomew? Yes, Mr. Bartholomew. Right away."

He hung up the phone.

"That was Mr. Bartholomew," he said.

"You don't say!" Sam rejoined sarcastically.

"He wants to see you."

"My master's voice."

"Wag your tail, Fido," Eddy said.

"Wag it," Sam groaned. "I can't even drag it."

He did a double take. "Hey—didn't I see them auditors go in there a few minutes ago?"

Eddy stared at him.

"Come to think of it," he said,

"I guess they did."

Sam stood up and you could almost hear the firing squad cocking its rifles.

"This is it, kid," he said softly.

"Maybe it's not, Sam," Eddy said, ready to cry.

Sam was walking toward the inner office door.

"I'm not scared, Eddy," he said, his head up. "It's a relief. I'll sleep nights, now."

He put his hands on the doorknob.

"Maybe my ulcer'll clear up, now."

He opened the door to the office in which Mr. Bartholomew's secretary worked, and stepped in. "Mr. Bartholomew wants to see me," Eddy heard him say to the secretary, as he closed the door behind him.

Eddy realized that his hand was still resting on the phone which he had set back on the cradle. He gave it a dirty look, like the phone had something to do with it, and put his hand in his pocket.

"Sammy!" he said softly to himself. "One hundred grand!"

He had a lot of sales orders to enter, but he didn't take down the sales ledger. He stood by the window and looked down at Fifth Street and the Square and then he got to

thinking about all the brokers in New York who got caught short in '29 and left their offices for the last time by the window. So he got to hell away from the window, thinking about Sam all the time.

It was about then that he noticed Fink for the first time. He jumped and his mouth maybe came open a little.

"Where in hell did you come from?" he said, quick.

"Out of the hallway," Fink said.

"Your name Eddy?"

"Yeah," Eddy said, tough because he was startled. "What about it? Whyn't you knock?"

Fink came over and stood in front of him. He was a stringy little guy with an ugly dark face, wearing a yellow sports shirt without a tie and a beautiful gray garbardine suit. He had on a hard flat straw hat.

"What about it?" he repeated in his side-of-the-mouth voice. "Hood sent me. Martin's my name, Fink Martin. Hood said drop in an' see did you wanta place a bet today."

"Hood who?"

"Whatta ya mean Hood who?" Fink said, acting sore. "Jim Hood," that's who. Ain't your name Eddy?"

"Sure," said Eddy. He relaxed a little and looked Fink over again. "Sure, my name's Eddy, an' I never hearda no Jim Hood. You got the wrong Eddy. My name's Cleary."

Fink lipiped his mouth tight together and put on a "give-me-strength" look. "He didn't tell me no last name. He says look up Eddy in nine-eleven Surety Trust Build-

ing."

"This is eight-eleven," Eddy told him.

"Oh, for Pete's sake," Fink said. He turned around and went for the door.

"Wait a minute."

Fink stopped and turned around. "Well?"

"Huh?" said Eddy.

"Look," Fink told him carefully.

"You said 'wait a minute'."

"Uh-yeah. Yeah, sure."

"Well, I can't spare that long,"

Fink said. "Make it fast, pal."

"You—you take bets on horses?" Eddy asked, in a voice like a young rooster's first crow.

Fink came back a step. "I'll take a bet on a camel if he's runnin' at Tropical," he announced firmly.

"You're a bookie, huh?"

"Well, I ain't no taxidermist, pal."

Eddy cleared his throat and spoke up. "Maybe I'm the right Eddy, after all. Got any odds?"

"Well, if you're on the level, Eddy . . ." Fink said.

"Do I look like a stool-pigeon?" Eddy demanded.

"Okay, Eddy," Fink said, "I guess you're okay. Odds? You want odds? At Tropical Park I can give you ten to one in the first race. Totem Pole. Finished last in a field of nine, his only other start."

"Let's see the form," Eddy said, his hands sweaty.

Fink pulled one out of a pocket. "Odds is okay, if you don't bet too heavy. Play odds like a side bet, Eddy. The thing to play is the

jockey, not the horse. Take Sylvester, won three yest'day, two on Monday, one on Sunday. Sylvester's hot as tabasco. He can ride any dog into the money."

"Is he on any long shots today?"

"Nah," Fink said. "Today Sylvester's got two favorites."

Eddy's finger moved down the form and stopped.

"Here's a hundred-to-one shot," he said. "Altruism."

"Never heard of him," Fink said promptly.

"I got a hunch," Eddy said, his voice very small.

"Play it. Always play hunches. Let's see who this Altruism is. Hm." He frowned. "Never raced before."

"Then how do you know he's no good?"

"I don't," Fink said, reasonably, "but look who he's runnin' against." He ticked them off. "War Alarm, unbeaten in three starts; Test Tube, last year's gold cup runner-up; File Clerk—say, File Clerk! There's a hunch for you, Eddy!"

"I ain't no file clerk," Eddy said, with a jiggle in his voice. "I'm playin' Altruism."

Fink shot his eyebrows up. "Okay, Eddie. Gimme your two bucks."

"Is that all I can bet?"

"No, Eddy. But I don't wanna play you for a sucker."

"How about a grand?" Eddy said, very quiet.

"Why don't you tie that bull to a fence," Fink told him. "Gimme your two bucks, Eddy. I gotta lam."

"Will you take a grand on Altru-

ism?" Eddy asked.

"Where would you get a grand?" Fink wanted to know.

"The old man," Eddy said, confident.

"On the level?"

"Sure."

"I'll have to get Hood's okay," Fink said. He picked up the phone and dialed, watching Eddy.

"Can you pay off a hundred grand?" Eddy demanded.

"Hood'll cover any bet I make," Fink snapped. "Hello," he said,

"gimme Hood." A wait, and he said "Hood—Fink. I'm over at

Surety Trust. I bumped into another Eddy. He's got a thousand bucks

he wants to put on a nag named Altruism in the third at Tropical.

What? A hundred to one. How about it? Uh huh." He listened a

second. Then he said "But if he wins, Flint. Uh huh. Sure I'm a

gambler. But one hundred—" He looked at the phone, then at Eddy.

"Hey—the guy hung up."

He cradled the phone. "Funny guy, Hood. Am I a gambler, he says. Okay, Eddy, one grand on Altruism's nose for you."

"Yeah?" Eddy's voice sounded a long way off.

"What's amatter?" asked Fink, "Cold feet?"

"Maybe," Eddy said. He walked over to the window, and turned around again. "How do I know you won't just walk outa here with my thousand and forget to see this guy Hood."

Fink settled his hard straw on his

head and pursed his ugly mouth. "If that's what you're thinkin', I'll be goin' Eddy."

"Wait," Eddy said.

"Wisecracks," he thought to himself as he went down the hall to the room where the cash was. "Sam says I'm good just for wisecracks."

In the far office, he opened the cash drawer, as he had done hundreds of times in the years past. Old Musgrove didn't even look at him, just said "Hi, Eddy," and went on clipping papers.

Eddy counted out ten one hundred-dollar bills and shut the drawer. "Hi, Muskie," he said, and went out again.

He counted it out to Fink.

"Okay, Eddy," Fink said. He pulled a sheet of white paper across Eddy's desk and began rubbing the centuries against it, one by one.

"What are you doin' that for?" Eddy wanted to know.

Fink went on rubbing. "If the green don't come off the bill's no good. Hey!" He held up a bill. "Counterfeit. Tell your old man to give you another one."

"Counterfeit?" Eddy echoed.

"Certainly. Look at General Grant. His nose shouldn't happen to Jimmy Durante. Go on, get me another century, Eddy."

"Wait a minute, Fink." Eddy got up and went out. In a minute he came back.

"Here you are," he said. He handed Fink a C note.

"Right!" Fink gave him an ironic salute with the money still in his

hand. "So long, Eddy. Here's your ticket. An' here's my card. Drop around about lunch-time, Eddy. Your dog'll be runnin' then, at Tropical."

He stood in the doorway. "Whatsa-matter, Eddy, you look kinda green around the gills. You all right?"

"Ha, ha," Eddy said. "You been lookin' at too much dough, Martin." "Maybe," Fink said. "Well—see ya. Oh, by the way. Tell your old man to pass that phony C note in church. Ha, ha, ha!"

I can't stay here, Eddy thought, listening to Fink's footsteps going down the hall, I gotta get outa here. He picked up his hat and stuck his head into the reception office.

"Miss Murphy," he started to say, "I feel kinda sick—" when the door to Mr. Bartholomew's office opened and Sam Arkus came out. When he saw Eddy, he rushed across the room, grabbed him by the arm, pulled him into their own room and shut the door.

Sam's face had a glow like W. C. Field's nose.

"Eddy! It's okay! I got by okay!" He let go of Eddy's arm and started a kind of a polka around the office, chanting "I got by, I got by, it's okay, it's okay!"

"What?" Eddy screamed, loud enough to scare the pigeons in Pershing Square. "You what?"

"I'm clear," Sam crooned. "The auditors missed it, Eddy. Whatsa-matter, boy, aren't you glad? Aren't you happy, kid?"

"You mean you ain't going to jail?" Eddy asked, very hushed.

"Not this year," Sam said, triumphant. "Not next year, either. Boyohboyohboy!"

"You sure, Sam?"

"Positive," Sam said firmly. "The auditors are through. They been paid an' they're gone. Not a chance o' gettin' caught, now."

"Not a chance, Sam?"

"Not a chance, Eddy," Sam told him, his thumbs in his vest.

"There could be a slip-up!" Eddy mused.

"No there couldn't, either!" Sam was irate. "Whaddaya mean, there could be a slip-up! Ain't you glad?"

"Sure," Eddy said, "but it don't solve things *completely*."

"For the time being, it does."

"You said it," Eddy mumbled.

"I'm still short, but that's okay."

"Sure."

"I'll think of somethin'. I got a whole year."

"I'm very glad," Eddy said quietly.

Sam wrinkled his forehead. "I don't quite get it, though. The old man butterin' me up like that. He says, 'We know everything is in good shape, Sam.' He says, 'No use putting these auditors to any more trouble. Just have 'em check the cash and that'll wind it up.'"

"The cash?" Eddy gulped.

"Yeah, the cash, Eddy. Don't worry. The cash balances. I know that."

"Does it?"

"Sure it does. I checked it this morning."

"This morning he checked it," Eddy told the room. Sam shot him

a queer look and he said, "How you gonna get the hundred grand back on the books?"

"I don't know, at the moment. Why?"

"Maybe I can raise some dough," Eddy proffered.

"You couldn't raise a window," Sam said good-naturedly. He reached into his coat, brought out a cigar and lit it, something he never did in the morning. "What are you worrying for?" he added genially. "I'm outa the jam."

"And I'm in," Eddy said, under his breath.

Sam took the cigar out of his mouth and laid it on the edge of the desk. "You been blabbering about something ever since I come into the room. What's on your mind?"

Eddy tried an airy wave of the hand. "Oh, nothing—nothing much. Two or three years in San Quentin—that's all." His voice skidded on the last words, and got shrill.

"Now, I suppose you been swiping postage stamps," Sam said, with a heavy blend of fatherliness and impatience.

"Oh, no . . . no. Nothing as bad as that."

"Look," Sam said. "Tell me, and then shut up. Talk." He stuck the cigar in his mouth and puffed.

"I'm your pal, Sam," Eddy pointed out.

"Sure."

"I'd do anything for you."

Sam slammed the cigar down on the desk. "Then talk sense, for Pete's

sake!"

Eddy was still holding his hat. He began turning it around in his hands like he was applying for a job.

"Sam—I hated to think of you goin' to San Quentin so much . . . that I'm goin' there myself for a few years."

"What are you saying . . . ?" Sam bleated.

Eddy inspected the brim. "I—I swiped a thousand bucks an' bet on a hundred-to-one shot at Tropical Park, Sam."

"No!" Sam shouted it. "Oh, no! No! You're kidding, Eddy!"

"I did it for you, Sam."

"For me! You sap! I'm in the clear—or I was. Now I'm sunk for sure!"

"You said I was only good for wisecracks." Eddy's voice had a sob blown up inside it. "A guy don't get a chance to—to prove his—friendship . . . often . . ."

"Put that goddam hat down!" Sam seized it and dashed it to the floor. "Friendship! You talk of friendship. We're both as good as behind bars right now!"

He whirled on Eddy again. "Didn't make any entries, I suppose?"

"Nope," Eddy said miserably, "I just took it."

"How'd you come to bet on a horse?" Sam sank into his chair out of sheer exhaustion. "What bookies do you know?"

"Here's his card," Eddy said, humbly. "He just kind of happened in by accident."

"Some accident," Sam shuddered. "A ten-ton truck should just happen by accident to run over you."

"It ain't far from here," Eddy said, indicating the card. It's at 395 South Spring. Maybe he'd give it back." He looked to see if Sam would agree with him.

"Sure," Sam said. "Bookies are that way. Philanthropists, every man of 'em." He tapped the card. "Probably, there's no such address."

Eddy brightened. "Sure there is. I know it. It's a bar. You know, one o' them pre-prohibition joints?"

"All this beats me," Sam sighed. He glowered at the card a moment, and sighed again. "Well," he said, "All we can do is try. Try to get that dough back. Time for lunch, anyway."

"He was an awful nice little guy, Sam," Eddy offered.

"Oh, for Pete's sake!" Sam exploded. "So'm I a nice little guy. It didn't keep me from stealin' a hundred grand, did it?"

He glanced at the card again. "Fink Martin. Sounds like a Harvard man. Fine old Bronx family!" He glared at Eddy. "Well, what are you standin' there for? Go on, fake an entry in the books for that thousand bucks."

"What'll I say?" Eddy asked, meekly.

"How do I know?" Sam rasped. "You're the big idea man today. Make it a million gross of paper clips. Come on. We'll call on Mr. Fink Martin."

IT WAS ONE of those places that I made the jump from saloon to speakeasy to cocktail joint all in one piece. It had the same mahogany bar the boys had leaned on when they made their bets on Theodore Roosevelt and Man o' War and Woodrow Wilson. Along the other wall of the long cool room was a row of booths with ornate stained-glass light-house lamps on them. At the back end of the place there was a door. When you knocked on it, a hole opened in it and you said something satisfactory to the face looking out of the hole. Or else.

The face inspected them and Sam waved Fink Martin's card. The face disappeared, and the door opened and they went on in. Men stood about in groups with their hats on, racing forms and pencils in their hands. A character wearing a derby transferred figures from a slip of paper to a tall blackboard. Telephones rang and now and then announcements rasped out of a loudspeaker over in one corner. Tobacco smoke drifted and eddied over and through and around and between everything in the room.

"See Martin anyplace?" Sam asked. He sounded a little nervous.

"There he is over by the telephones," Eddy said, suddenly.

They went over. The ugly little man looked up from a pile of paper slips. Something like a grin distorted his dark face as he recognized Eddy.

"Well, if it ain't the millionaire bookkeeper."

"Hello," Eddy said.

"Welcome to our humble joint," Martin waved. "It ain't like Hialeah."

"This is Sam Arkus, Fink," Eddy said. "My boss."

"Glad t' meetcha, Mr. Arkus. Smart man you got workin' for ya. He's gonna make himself a pile o' dough this afternoon. Ha, ha, ha!"

He eyed Sam doubtfully.

"Look, Martin," Sam said, "this is all a mistake. Eddy had no business bettin' a thousand bucks on a horse. The fact is, it wasn't his money."

"I know that," Martin said. "It was his boss's. Not many bosses like you, Mr. Arkus."

"No, no," Sam said. "It was the company's. He stole it."

Martin rolled his eyes upward and clucked his tongue.

"Now, Eddy," he said. "Would you do a thing like that?"

"Uh-huh," Eddy assented glumly.

"I'm surprised," Martin said. "You told me the old man—" He nodded at Sam, "—ran the place."

"Look," Sam said desperately, "he was trying to help somebody, so—"

"So he helped himself to a thousand bucks," Martin said, grinning.

"Friendship! It's beautiful!"

Sam groaned at the words. "Look, Martin," he pleaded, "give us a break and return the money. We both go to jail if he don't put it back."

There was a click followed by static from the loudspeaker in the corner. "At Tropical, in the sixth," a flat, impersonal voice announced,

"scratch Doughboy, number six hundred and twenty-four." It clicked again and went dead.

"I'm sorry fellas," Martin said. "I can't do nothin'. I just work here. I turned in the dough an' I can't get it back."

"Martin," Sam said desperately, "you got to help us."

"I'd like to, Arkus, but how can I? This is a business. Supposin' I ask the boss. He says it's a contract. He can't back out, neither can you. Where would we be if we asked you to take your money back . . . ?"

"Don'tcha see, Fink," Eddy said. "We'll go to the pen for this . . . !"

The speaker clicked again and the voice droned "Two minutes to post time for the third at Tropical. Place your bets now." It clicked off.

"Maybe the bills were counterfeit," Eddy squeaked, clawing at Fink's sleeve like it was a life-raft. "Tell your cashier the dough's no good, Fink."

"How can I, Eddy? He can spot a phony from fifty yards."

"The auditors are checking our books now, Martin." That was Sam's despairing offering.

Fink picked up his pile of papers. "All I can say is I'm sorry and I hope this nag wins," he said with finality. "I can't do a thing about it."

"At Tropical," the speaker announced, through its static, "they're at the post in the third."

"We're sunk, Eddy," Sam said.

Fink was moving away. "Sorry boys. I shoulda known better'n to

take your dough."

"He sounded like he meant it," said Eddy.

"That sure helps," Sam said. "Let's go."

"My gosh," Eddy said, "aint'cha even interested in hearin' the race run?"

"No," Sam said.

Eddy stood away from him. "Well I am. I started this and I'm gonna get my money's worth."

"For that much money it's gonna have to be good," Sam said. But he didn't move.

"At Tropical, in the third, correction," droned the loudspeaker. "Sylvester is riding Altruism."

"Hey!" Eddy yelled. "Did you hear that, Sam?"

"You mean we get a jockey, too?"

Eddy's eyes were hot and bright. "Don't be funny. This guy Sylvester's hot."

The unexcited voice blared out of the speaker again.

"At Tropical, in the third, they're away at three-seventeen."

"They're off!" Eddy yelled.

"I got ears," Sam said.

Eddy turned to him. "I thought you was leavin'."

"I got nothin' else to do."

Eddy gripped his arm. "Quiet . . . !"

The loudspeaker was droning again. ". . . Aaat the quar-terr, it's War Alarm, Dive Bomber, Calumet Pal, Done In, Westward Ho, File Clerk, Valiant Ned, Mashie Niblick, Hot Bite, Golden West, Test Tube, Auction Block, Early Riser aaaaand Altruism . . ."



"No wonder you got a hundred to one," Sam said. "There's a hundred horses in the race."

"That ain't a race, it's a caravan," Eddy groaned softly, and looked blindly at the roomful of intent men.

"Last place," Sam rasped relentlessly. "Satisfied?"

Eddie sighed gustily. "Yeah. Okay, Sam, let's go. Twenty Grand couldn't win in a mob like that unless he cut across the infield."

He walked firmly toward the door. Reaching it, he turned. Sam hadn't moved from his tracks. Eddy walked back to Sam.

"I said I was satisfied. What are you waitin' for?"

"I ain't waiting," Sam growled. "Quit pushin' me."

"Who's pushin'?" Eddie hissed indignantly. "What in—"

Sam shook his head fiercely at him. "Shhh! Listen..."

"...aaaat the haaalf, it's Valiant Ned by a length, War Alarm second, Test Tube by a nose, Dive Bomber, Done In, Calumet Pal, Westward Ho, File Clerk, Hot Bite, Golden West, Early Riser, Mashie Niblick, Altruism aaand Auction Block has dropped out!"

"That nag Altruism is taking the pause that refreshes," was Sam's comment.

"He's come up," Eddie defended.

"If enough drop out, he can win," Sam conceded.

"The race would have to last two days," Eddy shook his head. "Well, we tried, anyway, eh, kid?"

Sam glared at him. "They oughta

run it in heats."

"Uh—might as well hang around till the end, huh?"

Sam shrugged. "I guess so."

"...aaand into the streeetch... Valiant Ned still is leading by a length over Test Tube, War Alarm is third aaand coming up is Altruism."

Fink's voice at Eddy's elbow got off a one-syllable yawp. "What?"

Eddy whirled on Sam. "Sammy, did you hear...?" He grabbed Fink by the lapels. "Is it over? Why don't he give us the results?"

Sam was puffing a cigar like he was sending smoke signals. His hands were trembling.

"Get the results!" he grated fiercely to Fink. "Get 'em!"

"All right, all right," Fink growled, glaring at him. "Hey, Porky," he yelled across the room. "Got the finish?"

"Coming over the mike now, Fink," the announcer yelled back, in his natural voice.

Eddy beat on a table with his fists.

"Sylvester, Sylvester, ride, boy, RIDE!"

"Relax, relax," Fink advised him. "It's too late to pray. The race is over, now."

"Then who won?" screamed Eddy.

"How do I know?" Fink said.

"The wire's always a minute behind."

"We got a chance," Sam whispered, chewing his cigar.

"Too good," Fink growled back.

"Why did Hood let me take that bet?" he demanded.

The speaker came on.

"Here it is!" Eddy squeaked.

"The winnah of the third at Tropical," the announcer stated, "is Altruism. War Alarm is second, Valiant Ned is third, The winnah pays two hundred an' one dollahs an' fifteen cents, fifty-two dollahs an' seven..."

Eddy collapsed in Sam's arms.

"He won!"

"How about *that*!" Sam's voice was full of holy awe.

"Am I a chump now?" Eddy yelled. "Yippee!"

"You're a champ, Eddy," Sam said, thumping him, "a champ!"

"It was nothin', Sam."

"Only a sap could do it," Sam told him.

"Thanks, Sam. Thanks!!"

Sam whirled on Fink. "Fink, I almost forgot. You gotta fork over."

The little man's ugly face was wild-eyed.

"It may bust the joint," he said, hoarsely. "How about callin' it off, boys?"

"Remember what you said about contracts?" Sam rasped.

Fink spread his hands. "Okay. It's our game. We win, we lose. We'll make it up. But if I'd known they was switchin' Sylvester on that dog..."

"When do we get paid off?" Sam demanded.

"Right now, Arkus. Come on over to the cashier." Fink led the way across the room.

"Cash?" Eddy breathed. You pay cash?"

"We got no bank account. First thing you know we'd have to pay income tax." Fink stopped at a grilled window. A large young man with a puffy white face looked out at them.

"Gimme your ticket, Eddy," Fink said.

Like in a dream, Eddy handed him the bit of paper. Fink pushed it under the grille.

"Two hundred grand, Speed," he said.

The puffy young man looked at the ticket, consulted a slip of paper with race results on it, and reached into his cash-drawer.

"He don't bat an eye," Eddy said hoarsely.

"Shut up," Sam told him.

"I'm gonna rub every bill, like you did, Fink—"

THE POLICE whistle shrilled over the smoky room like a siren. There was an instant's dead silence. "The cops!" Fink roared. "It's a raid!"

"The dough..." Eddy squawked.

"Grab that cashier!" Sam made vain attempts to reach under the steel grille. The puffy young man, who had not spoken a word in the whole time, moving now like a mindless machine. He scooped cash and records into a black handbag and was streaking for the end of the room as Sam still clawed at the counter.

"He's goin' out the back door!" Eddy howled despairingly.

A heavy hand in a blue sleeve fell on his shoulder. "But you ain't, me lad," a booming voice proclaimed. "You'll go out the front door, like a little man! Get movin'."

Eddy looked at Sam and Sam looked helplessly back at him.

"I knew this deal would land us behind bars, one way or another," Sam moaned.

"Stow it and get goin', Mac," said the cop.

The jailer's footsteps came down the concrete-floored corridor like the knocks of doom.

"Here it comes, Sam," Eddy said, from his narrow bunk.

"Ya got a visitor, boys," the jailer said.

"Prob'ly an auditor," Sam said.

"Hiya, boys," said Fink Martin's voice.

Eddy and Sam sat bolt upright and looked at the little bookie, grinning through the bars at them. The jailer clumped away.

"Don't let on who I am," Fink hissed.

"You sure faded fast, Martin," Sam grunted.

"On the level," Fink said. "I thought this Hood was square, fellas. He blew town with a grand of mine."

"A good story, Martin." Sam lay down again.

"Listen, Arkus. I coulda stayed away from here."

"You still takin' bets, Fink?" Eddy inquired smoothly.

"Will you shut up, Eddy?" Fink

asked. The long green bills crinkled crisply as he smoothed them and held them out to Eddy through the bars.

"My thousand bucks!"

"Count it, Eddy." Fink raised his voice. "Hey, guard—lemme outa here."

Eddy grinned sheepishly. "I don't know what to say, Fink."

"Say no to the next bookie you meet, Eddy. Well, so long. You'll be out soon."

The steel door at the end of the corridor clanged behind him.

"Try to get some sleep," Sam growled. "I guess the judge don't want us till tomorrow morning."

They were en route downtown from jail in the fresh morning air. The street car lumbered along. Sam read the paper. Two housewives discussed the sale in linens at the Downtown Department Store.

"Well," Eddy said. "Ten bucks fine ain't bad."

Sam said "Uh." He went on reading the paper.

"Quite a play they give Altruism on the sport-page," Eddy said. "Picture of Sylvester. Just a kid. Nineteen."

"Eddy!" Sam screamed.

"What in hell, Sam . . . ?"

The two housewives were staring.

"Look!" Sam pointed a shaking finger at a two-column cut of a heavy-jowled character. "Eddy—it's Bartholomew!"

"They've arrested him!" Eddy seized the paper and devoured it with his eyes. "For embezzlement,

Sam!"

"Listen!!" Sam chattered. "'Bartholomew confessed to having embezzled company funds to the tune of more than a quarter of a million dollars, when auditors discovered a shortage in cash of one thousand dollars!'"

He fell back in his seat. "Why, the dirty thief!!" Then he looked over at Eddy. "Hey—what are you

doin', there?"

Eddy carefully counted out five one-hundred dollar bills and with a grin laid them in Sam's unresisting palm.

"What you gonna do?" Sam asked, wide-eyed.

"I," Eddy said, "am gonna look up Fink and find out what dog Sylvester's ridin' this afternoon at Tropical."

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Film Star Keenan Wynn, a frequent guest on "Suspense", says he's been ridden by a nightmare ever since he was first signed to appear.

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"I keep dreaming the same thing until I'm afraid it'll come true," laments Keenan. "I see my father's (Ed Wynn's) face at the mike but I hear my own voice. Just as 'Suspense' reaches its climax I yell: 'Graham, this one will kill you!'"

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